REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are currently pending of which claims 1, 9, 20, 21, 22, and 25 are independent. Claims 22 and 25 are currently amended. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the action mailed November 1, 2005, is requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

The Examiner rejected claims 22-27 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,594,068 to Sui (hereinafter "Sui"). Applicant traverses the rejections.

The Examiner allowed claims 1-21. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's allowance of claims 1-21.

Section 102 Rejections

Claim 22 stands rejected as anticipated by Sui. Claim 22, as amended, is directed to an optical component group that includes a structured half wavelength plate coupled between a first birefringent material and a second birefringent material. The component group also includes a wavelength plate coupled between the second birefringent material and a Faraday rotator where the second birefringent material is coupled between the structured half wavelength plate and the wavelength plate.

The Examiner states that Sui discloses the optical component group of claim 22 in FIGS. 8A and 8B. Applicant respectfully disagrees. In FIGS. 8A and 8B of Sui, a side view and a top view are shown for a 2 x 2 optical switch. *See* col. 5, lines 7-10. The optical switch includes a number of optical components positioned between a pair of input ports and a pair of output ports. *See* col. 5, lines 11-51; FIG. 8A.

The optical components include two symmetrical component sets coupled together by a Faraday rotator and half wavelength plate such that a light path traveling from an input port travels through a first component set to reach the faraday rotator and half wavelength plate and then through a mirror component set to reach an output port. *See* FIG. 8A. In particular, in order from the input ports, the components include: a first birefringent crystal, a first structured half wavelength plate, a faraday rotator, a half wavelength plate, a second structured wavelength plate, and a second birefringent crystal. *See* col. 5, lines 6-51; FIG. 8A. The second birefringent

crystal is used by Sui to combine a pair of separate light components and direct the combined light beam to a particular output port. *See* col. 5, lines 38-43.

The optical switch in FIGS. 8A and 8B, however, do not disclose or suggest an optical component group where the second birefringent material is coupled between the structured half wavelength plate and the wavelength plate. Instead, the optical switch disclosed by Sui includes a half wavelength plate positioned between the Faraday rotator and the second birefringent material. *See* FIG. 8A; col. 5, lines 24-41. The position of the second birefringent crystal in claim 22 allows the second birefringent crystal to direct light to both the Faraday rotator and also to particular quadrants of the structured wavelength plate depending on the input light polarization and direction of light travel.

The second birefringent crystal in Sui, however, is coupled after, and not between, the structured wavelength plate and the half wavelength plate. Consequently, the second birefringent crystal does not direct light to either the structured wavelength plate or to the wavelength plate because light travels through the switch in only one direction. *See* FIGS. 8A-B; col. 5, lines 6-51. The second birefringent crystal in Sui is instead used to combine and direct received light to a particular output port for the optical switch. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 22, as well as claims 23-24, which depend from claim 22, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 25 stands rejected as anticipated by Sui. Claim 25, as amended, is directed to an optical component group that includes a structured half wavelength plate coupled between a first birefringent material and a second birefringent material. The component group also includes a Faraday rotator coupled between the second birefringent material and a wavelength plate, where the second birefringent material is coupled between the structured half wavelength plate and the Faraday rotator. For at least the same reasons as set forth with respect to claim 22, claim 25 as well as claims 26-27, which depend from claim 25, are in condition for allowance.

Applicant respectfully requests that all pending claims be allowed. Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 3b and replaces the original sheet including Fig. 3b.

In Figure 3b, reference characters not mentioned in the specification are removed. Additionally, an inadvertent error in the position of the path arrows between items 140 and 120, and items 240 and 220 is corrected.

Attachments following last page of this Amendment:

Replacement Sheet (1 pages)
Annotated Sheet Showing Change(s) (1 pages)

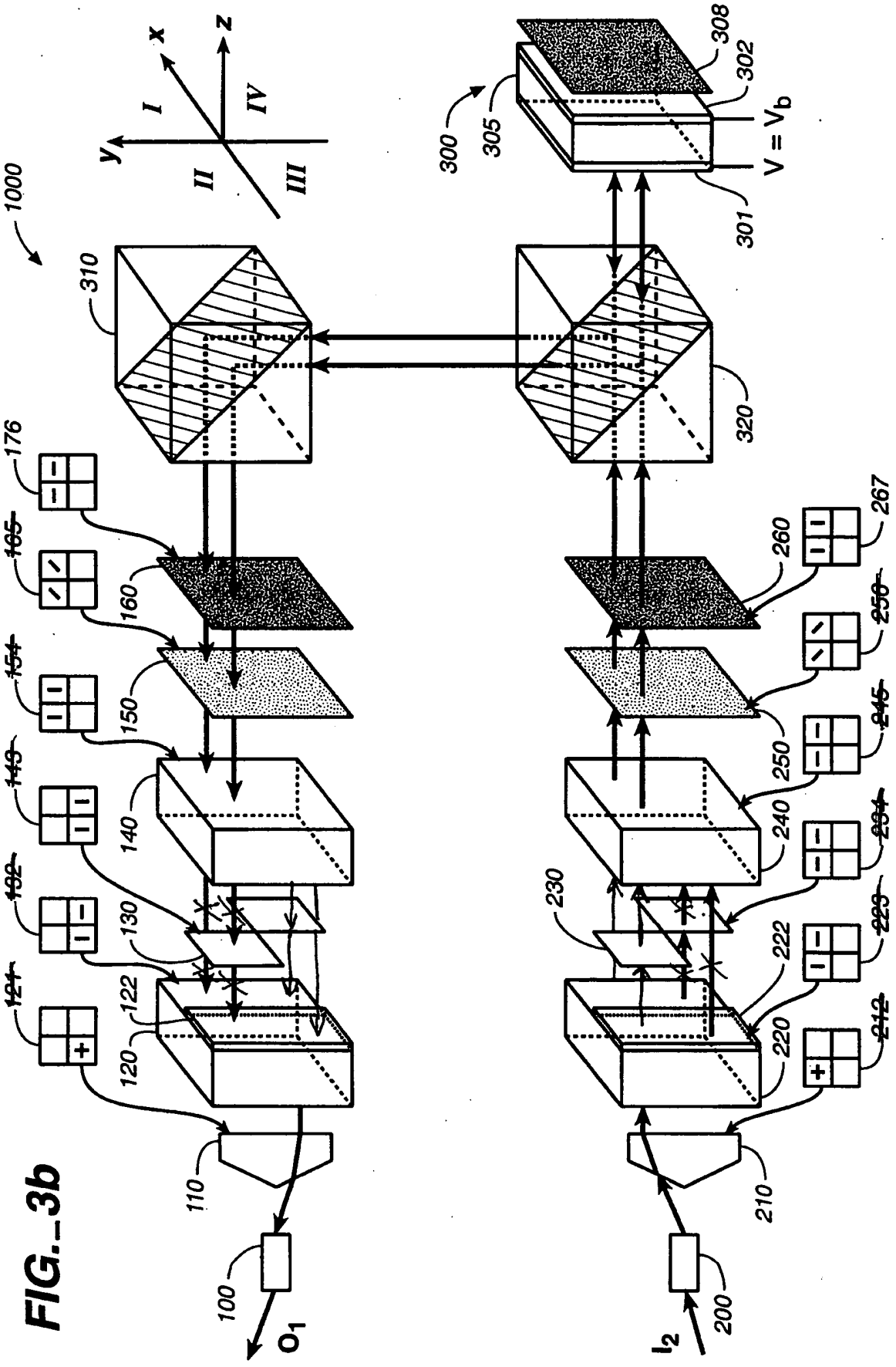

FIG._3b